

US YouTuber who staged plane crash jailed for six months

December 5 2023, by Huw GRIFFITH



Trevor Jacob staged a dramatic plane crash that saw him bail out high over Southern California in a bid to garner viewers.

A daredevil YouTuber who deliberately crashed his plane to boost the number of viewers on his channel and then lied about it to investigators

has been jailed for six months after reaching a plea deal, US authorities said Monday.

In a video of the event entitled "I crashed my airplane," Trevor Jacob appears to experience engine trouble while flying over southern California in November 2021.

The dramatic footage, viewed millions of times on YouTube, shows Jacob, now 30, ejecting from the single-engine plane—selfie stick in hand—and parachuting into the dense vegetation of Los Padres National Forest.

Cameras placed all over the aircraft show its out-of-control descent into the forest, and its eventual crash landing.

Jacob, a former Olympic snowboarder, films himself hiking to the wreckage where he appears dismayed to discover the water he packed has disappeared.

He does, however, have the presence of mind to recover the footage from cameras.

He then documents an apparently arduous trek through undergrowth to reach safety.

In the weeks after the incident, investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) launched a probe into the crash, and Jacob was ordered to preserve the wreckage.

The YouTuber told officials he did not know where the plane had gone down.

"In fact, on December 10, 2021, Jacob and a friend flew by helicopter to the wreckage site," the US District Attorney's Office for the Central District of California said Monday.

"There, Jacob used straps to secure the wreckage, which the helicopter lifted and carried to Rancho Sisquoc in Santa Barbara County, where it was loaded onto a trailer attached to Jacob's pickup truck."

The remains of the single engine plane were cut into small pieces and dumped in trash bins in and around Lompoc City Airport, in a bid to hide evidence of the crash.

The FAA, the body that regulates flying in the United States, yanked Jacob's pilot's license in April 2022.

When investigators closed in, Jacob cut a deal and agreed to plead guilty to one count of destruction and concealment with the intent to obstruct a [federal investigation](#).

"Jacob lied to [federal investigators](#) when he submitted an aircraft accident incident report that falsely indicated that the aircraft experienced a full loss of power," the US District Attorney's Office said in a statement.

"[Jacob] most likely committed this offense to generate [social media](#) and [news coverage](#) for himself and to obtain financial gain," federal prosecutors said.

"Nevertheless, this type of 'daredevil' conduct cannot be tolerated."

Jacob's original video, along with several others he posted after the escapade, have now been removed from YouTube, but a copy can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=41iOvFuKsyY

Pilots and aviation experts have been immensely critical of Jacob in the almost two years since the video was initially published.

Many noted that Jacob had failed to take even elementary steps to restart his plane's apparently troubled engine.

Others pointed out that he could easily have safely glided the plane to a landing spot, and that wearing a parachute while flying a small aircraft was highly unusual.

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